

Into the Sun

by Kaikouken

Category: Naruto

Genre: Drama, Romance

Language: English

Characters: Kakashi H., Minato N.

Status: Completed

Published: 2016-04-11 20:35:14

Updated: 2016-04-11 20:35:14

Packaged: 2016-04-27 19:43:51

Rating: M

Chapters: 1

Words: 13,736

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Sensei is the only thing he has, and so Kakashi clings on, hoping to keep him there.

Into the Sun

Kakashi's throat is hurting when he wakes up, hyperaware of the stones digging in his back. The left side of his face throbs; his left eye is stingingâ€"it is as if he has been crushed by a huge rock. And there's nothing but darkness in front of him.

Am I dead?

He sits up with a start, and regrets it instantly when his head spins. Stars fill his vision, and when they fade a little, he learns that he has been looking into the night sky, still alive, still breathing. His left side throbs insistently.

He turns his head and finds a yellow-green blur beside him, and Kakashi recognizes him instantly. He cannot confuse this person with anyone andâ€"

"Sensei! Why?!"

"I'm sorry I couldn't make it in time."

It hits him like a barrage of kunai hurled head on, piercing every inch of his skin and digging deep into his bones. _Obito, Rin, everythingâ€|_

Bile touches the back of his throat and he gulps, letting it burn back.

"Where's Rin?" he asks urgently, his entire self trembling. Ifâ€|no!â€"he can't even think that.

The blur becomes clearer and he recognizes the smooth features of his Sensei, the expressionless face looking back at him. Sensei is pointing in front of them and Kakashi tears his eyes away from him.

Rin stands in the middle of the clearing, clothes billowing a little in the wind, looking upwards as if in a prayer—for Obito, probably—a solitary figure in the overwhelming darkness.

But she's safe, a part of Kakashi's mind whispers.

For how long?—another part of him questions cruelly.

Her hair flutters and she looks back, gazing at him with bright brown eyes, with an emotion he has never seen before—and it feels wrong. He quashes the thought before it grows gargantuan—something he's not ready to deal with.

His left side throbs sharply as if in protest, and Kakashi ignores it.

His Sensei explains things and they feel like white noise to Kakashi. He's too engrossed in the fact that he's lost yet another person, yet again.

I don't want to die yet!—

I wish I could have lived a little longer.—

Sensei gets up, and Rin follows him, and Kakashi has no other choice but to follow. They complete the mission and make Obito's grave—Rin places flowers on it and stands back. Kakashi knows that Sensei is just behind him—not allowing himself to go closer.

The pain in the left side of his body only grows sharper.

Kakashi feels oddly drained as Sensei submits his report and Obito's family, and with them, the entire Uchiha clan is informed of the mission. They swarm in the mission room like flies. Some are merely curious, some are contemptuous, some sad and some are morbidly interested. It is the last type that makes Kakashi wary.

The Uchiha clan head, Uchiha Fugaku steps forward and examines his eye. A few seconds later, he asks, the very figure of politeness, for Sensei, Kakashi and Rin to step inside the Uchiha compound.

Once in the meeting hall of the Konoha's police department, most of the polite façade fades away and he examines Kakashi's—no, Obito's eye again.

The door of the room bursts open and a thin, sallow, dark-haired woman stumbles inside. Her cheeks are flushed and eyes wide, tears trailing down her chin—and Kakashi recognizes her instantly.

Mother. No—he corrects himself. Obito's mother.—

Cold, callused fingers are curled against his throat in another instant and he gets a face full of a grieving mother in front of him.

"Youâ€" insults die on her lips and she just tightens the pressure. "You _took _my son's eye! How _dare_ you?!" she screeches.

"Uchiha-san," Sensei begins in a placating tone but the woman howls harder.

"Why did you take my son's eye, you bloody _thief_! Do you think you can get powerful by stealing _it_?!" she shakes him like a rag doll. Kakashi feels moisture drip from Obito's eye again and the throb returns. All he wants to do is sleep. Just close his eyes and never wake up.

"Remove her," he hears the cold voice of Uchiha Fugaku and abruptly the pressure is released. He stumbles and falls on the floor, dazed. All of his energy is drained and he feels like passing out. Then, Sensei holds him up and the world focuses sharply for a second and he inhales.

The woman is taken away and Kakashi's body is pulsing, _hurting_ desperately. The world focuses only when the Uchiha head looks at him in the eye with swirling Sharingan and Kakashi wants to throw up, right in his face.

"So," he addresses Sensei. "You're saying that Obito gave his Sharingan to Hatake-san here."

Sensei nods in affirmative.

"I cannot believe that statement," the man replies bluntly.

"It _is_ the truth," Sensei replies rather dryly.

"Why would Obito do that?" Fugaku asks in a sharp tone. He paces around the two of them a little and Sensei keeps his hands on Kakashi's shoulders. "It is obvious that there's some foul play here."

"We are telling the truth!" Rin makes a sharp, shrill protest. "Obito asked me to do the transplant!"

Fugaku levels her with a glare and says, "But why? The Sharingan is our most protected treasure, our bloodline. Even if Obito had not activated it yet, he was well aware of the responsibilities that came with it and the secrecy he was supposed to maintain. I find it ludicrous that he would just give it to an outsider as a Jounin graduating present."

"But he _did_!" Rin repeats almost desperately, near tears. The shock of Obito's death has not passed yet and this is only making it worse.

"It's alright Rin, that's enough," Sensei says softly and places his hand on her shoulder too. She falls quiet and wipes her eyes furiously.

The Uchiha elders converse amongst themselves, bringing their heads together and discussing furtively. A few tense minutes later, they consult with the head and give their assent to something. Kakashi

watches dazedly as the man approaches him again and places his hand on Obito's eye.

"I'm afraid, Namikaze-san," he says in a voice which doesn't sound contrite at all. "Hatake-san will have to forfeit the eye. He cannot keep it."

That gets a rise out of Sensei; the man speaks in a low voice, but his meaning is very clear. "I'm afraid too, Uchiha-san, that this will not happen. Obito-kun was my student, and I will honour his last wish. He wanted Kakashi-kun to have this eye" as a present or as an apology, that hardly matters and Kakashi-kun is going to keep it."

Uchiha Fugaku presses his lips together and looks highly displeased. The lines underneath his lips darken with his frown, accentuating his intimidating visage.

"I see," he says in a mild, deceptive tone. "You will regret that, Namikaze-san."

"Thank you, Uchiha-san," Sensei says equably and pushes Kakashi and Rin out of the Uchiha compound. The second they are out, Kakashi collapses in a dead faint.

The constant throb in his left eye is the first thing he notices and second is the warm sunlight tickling his cheek. He's still exhausted, body feeling like a dead weight and his left region feels exceptionally sore.

"Good morning Kakashi-kun," Sensei says in a tired voice and Kakashi's eyes snap to his.

"Where" how?" Kakashi tries to articulate and Sensei interrupts:

"In the hospital, Kakashi-kun. You're suffering from chakra drain."

"How?" he thinks.

"The Sharingan eye of yours is eating up all of your chakra to maintain itself." Sensei says in a serious tone, "It has to be removed, or your chakra will be sucked dry."

"No!" Kakashi sits up in a flurry and ignores the protesting muscles. "No!" he repeats forcefully.

"Uchiha-san was right," Sensei says with a chuckle "but it has no hint of humor in it. "I'm regretting it. You will die if you keep it. You're not an Uchiha so you can't bring it back into its deactivated form."

"No!" Kakashi says. "I can't, Obito wanted" wants me to keep it" "I can't give it up! I promised" _

Sensei looks bemused and mostly sad. "Kakashi" "

"There," he manages, "there has to be some way. I can't give up! Sensei!" he looks up into the blue eyes of his teacher and wishes

ferverently.

"Kakashi-kun, don't be stubborn," Sensei chides and Kakashi bristles in anger.

"Are you giving up? Do you want me to betray my comrade, my teammate, my brother?" _where's this coming from?_â€"Kakashi thinks inside. Maybe Obito's talkativeness has also been given to him with the Sharingan.

Sensei gives a bone-weary sigh and says, "All right, I'll look into it. But for the time being," he leans over and ties his hitai-ate over his forehead and then tilts it to cover his left eye. "Keep it closed."

He gives Kakashi a soft smile and exits the room, just as Rin steps in. She puts some flowers in the window side vase and shuffles about the room, not making direct eye contact with him. He feels that there is a certain aloofness in her manner, a distance between them like a gaping chasm that he has always wanted.

Obito's death has not brought them closerâ€"instead, it has torn them apart.

Rin has just grown upâ€"Kakashi will realize soon.

Sensei returns a week later; dark circles under his eyes and the sickly pallor of his skin belying his state despite the smile that is firmly plastered on his face.

Kakashi is still in the hospital, strictly prohibited from doing anything taxingâ€"not even chakra trainingâ€"_especially_ not chakra training.

The man who follows him into his room is even more unsettling. Kakashi hasn't forgotten the cold, narrow eyes of the Uchiha clan head.

"So you're still alive." He sniffs, as if Kakashi were some maggot he wished to squish under his sandal.

"You promised, Uchiha-san," Sensei pitches in cheerfully and the man's frown deepens, but to Kakashi's surprise, he says nothing nasty.

"Leave us, it is bad enough that I'm giving out something to him," then he pauses and levels a glare at Sensei and says, "I will only tell him enough to surviveâ€"I will not help him after that."

"It's all right," Sensei nods. "Survival will be enough."

As Uchiha Fugaku begins to explain; Kakashi wonders, very briefly, just how his Sensei managed to get this man to comply.

By the end of the lesson, Kakashi still has not managed to figure it out, but now he knows how to keep Obito's gift, at least.

It takes him three long months, but Kakashi manages to direct chakra into his eye and keep it regulated enough so as to not pass out every time he uses Sharingan. The tips Uchiha clan head left him prove out

to be effective and Kakashi is grateful.

He has not seen his teacher in these months, being one of the strongest Jounin has its drawbacks; the man is always on the frontlines. Rin visits him frequently, mostly to see his progress and checks on Obito's eye. He always gets this strange feeling when she touches the eye with her chakra. Though he never mentions it.

These days, Rin looks more and more tired. As if she is the one carrying the Sharingan—she's also unexpectedly jumpy.

One day he questions her, and her response is most unsettling. He pushes it away a little while later, saying that she's being melodramatic, but feels that Rin's paranoia might not have been wrong. It's strange because they are shinobi, they are saved more times by their instincts than anything else. Kakashi blames his reaction the fact that he is exhausted and it's awkward enough to be around her. So he dismisses her concerns without a second thought.

And it does turn out to be right just a week before Kakashi is released from the hospital, when they discover her body in one of the patrolling areas. No one can say how she died; but Kakashi knows.

Have you ever had the feeling that someone's always watching you—“from the shadows, just waiting to strike?

Rin is dead.

It rains on her funeral, heavy and dark—and somehow, it fits perfectly, despite being so cliché. It also hides the tears slipping down from Obito's eye, and the ones that are not falling from Kakashi's.

He has not only failed to protect her, he has also failed to keep the very promise he made to Obito with this eye.

It is an uncomfortable itch, along with the throbbing sensations that have returned. His entire left side aches, burning as if in sorrow. Kakashi's heart is also on the left hand side, and he attributes the ache inside to that.

He passes out before he can make it back to his home; collapsing midway on a street, falling face first into a puddle. He hopes he will drown, but no. Then he will have to face Obito and explain to him just why he has failed.

And Kakashi cannot do that. Because he himself does not know how he failed.

He does. But he doesn't. It has no explanation.

When he does wake up, it is in Sensei's apartment that he finds himself. Nestled between the warm covers that smell exactly like the man, he is still alive and breathing.

The rain continues to fall outside, relentless and merciless: washing over everything—and if it only would wash away his sins.

The door of the room bursts open and Sensei steps in, disheveled and worried. He smiles a bit when he sees Kakashi and says, "You're awake."

I'm not supposed to be, but yes, I am.

Kakashi does not speak.

The man is carrying a bowl of steaming soup with him that he places at Kakashi's bedside, nudging the covers with his foot so that he could also sit. The bed dips under his weight and Sensei exhales, cheeks puffing out comically.

"Kakashi-kun," Sensei says in that way of hisâ€"it has always irritated Kakashi, but today, it fails to have any effect on him. "I'm sorry."

Why are you sorry? I'm the one who should be sorryâ€"though I don't deserve any forgiveness.

The man's hand is a firm pressure on his shoulder, but the warmth barely reaches Kakashi's heart. Kakashi feels panicked at the thought. Sensei's warmth can always make its way inside anyone, so why not today? Why can't he feel the compassion simmering just below the surface, threatening to overflow at any second?

He wants it, he craves it, and he aches for it so badly, it scares him.

His fingers clutch Sensei's finger, to stop them from retreating, shrinking away in disgustâ€"_would Sensei hate him if he knew that Kakashi is the one who killed both of his students?â€"_and Kakashi doesn't want to let go. Not now, not ever.

"Kakashi-kun?" Sensei's brows furrow lightly, wrinkling the noble forehead a little.

Kakashi opens his mouth to speak, but no words come out. He cannot confess what he has done. He can't tell the man just how he has failed him and how has he betrayed him.

_Don't go! Please don't go! Don't _**_leave_**_me!_

He cannot articulate that plea, but he wants to. His other hand reaches out, acting on its ownâ€"_his brain wouldn't comply to anything he wants!â€"_and scrabbles for purchase on his Sensei's blue shirt. He fists the material between his fingers and pushes his body towards the man, willing to do anything to get close.

He takes a shaky breath, stumbling over it as if he were a novice at breathing. Kakashi presses his unmasked face into Sensei's chest, and pants softly.

If Sensei is surprised at having a lap full of Kakashi, he does not show it. He adjusts him slowly, gently, as if he were a doll made of porcelain, breakable and preciousâ€"and holds closer.

Not close enough! Not warm enough!

Obito's eye stings and begins to leakâ€"letting warm liquid drip and

bleed into Sensei's shirt.

Kakashi's not crying, Obito is, but it is he who Sensei comforts. His hands are large, rough but gentle and warm on his body. His voice is mild caress, whispery breath trailing over his senses, but not warm enough. He needs more. He wants more.

He's so selfish and greedyâ€"but Sensei is all he has left.

"Senâ€|sei," he manages, voice raspy and gravelly in his throat, hurting him with each syllable that escapes. He fumbles with Sensei's shirt, tearing it accidentallyâ€"the man stiffens, Kakashi knows it because he can feel it in his bonesâ€"and presses his hands, palms flat on Sensei's naked warm skin.

"Kakashi-kun?" Sensei makes a confused sound, awkward and wondering, not willing to push him awayâ€"_yet_.

"No!" Kakashi rasps, pressing his mouth against the man's sternumâ€"_the pulse flutters beneath his touchâ€"_and he tries to mold their bodies together, so that no one can take Sensei away from him.

Kakashi's lips quiver and his left eye burns, wetting Sensei's chestâ€"but Kakashi can't bring himself to wrench them apart. He tangles his fingers in Sensei's soft hair, tugging on the strands painfully, feeling them slip from the space between his fingers like liquid silk.

Sensei gasps softly when Kakashi pulls several hairs out, and goes back to tugging. He is trying to burrow himself deeper, tighter, closer against Sensei's body.

"I'm here, Kakashi-kun," Sensei murmurs suddenly, returning his hands to Kakashi's body. "I'm not leaving."

_You willâ€"_Kakashi screams in his headâ€"_I'll end up killing you too!_

Outside, he digs his fingers into Sensei's back, pulling down the tattered remains of his blue cotton shirt. Warmth seeps underneath his nails and he recognizes the tang of copper in the air.

Kakashi whimpers.

"It's alright, Kakashi," Sensei whispers, reading his mind by the noise of distress lodged in his throat.

He swallows it, bitter and scorching, like swallowing a lump of burning coal. It sears down his esophagus and settles heavily in his stomach.

It's not all right! It will never be all right now!

Unbidden, his teeth clamp down the soft skin of Sensei's throat and he pulls whatever he can in his mouth. He feels like one of the puppies he has seen in his childhood, teething and blind, they bite down on anything and everything they can findâ€"lost and scared. That's how Kakashi feels right now, even if he doesn't like

it.

Sensei is all he has.

The bland, slightly salty flavour of the man spreads on his tongue and replaces the bitterness with mild saline one. He doesn't bite, but uses his teeth to keep the flesh in his mouth. His tongue is pressed against it and he keeps on sucking the flavour into his being.

Sensei's heart thuds against below Kakashi's ribcage: a solid sound reverberating deeply against his ribs and spine.

"Kakashi-kun, let go," Sensei's voice is still gentle, but a firmness has crept into it that sends Kakashi's heart into a flurry of panic. It grips his sides, piercing his flesh with iron claws, so sharp that he cannot help gasping.

He flails, and ends up pressing his knee in Sensei's groin and freezes, because Sensei is the warmest there. The man burns like a furnace, but that seems like the core of his fire—so hot that Kakashi almost falters.

The flesh slips from his mouth, glistening with saliva and angry red in colour; but Kakashi's eyes are riveted to the man's crotch where he burns the strongest.

Curious, he untangles his hands from Sensei's hair and pressed them on his jutting hips, opening them further and then puts his right hand firmly in the middle. It stays there for a fraction of a second—too short—as it is grabbed by Sensei and pulled away with so much force that it hurts.

Kakashi gasps and finds himself pinned to the bed, hands secured above his head and Sensei's knee restraining his legs. He gets one long look into the rueful blue eyes before Sensei's other hands lightly touches his forehead. Even in such a muddled state, Kakashi recognizes the jutsu and falls, spiraling away into the darkness.

Kakashi has not seen him for three months now, after waking up alone in his small apartment, Sensei is gone. He doesn't know what to feel—ashamed at his actions or sad at the rejection. Within the last three months, Kakashi has grown more than he has in so many years. It's funny how death can change people. He has never felt older in his life than he does now.

Kakashi is fourteen, but the brittleness of old age has crept on him. His chest is heavy and his gaze is embittered.

As a new ANBU guard, he has also learned just why Sensei pushed him away that day. More than ever, Kakashi now feels it burn in the pit of his stomach. And each glance he catches of the man now, garbed in the white coat with flames licking at the ends, stokes the fire harder and deeper in his being.

Those flames on Sensei's coat have been painted there by the woman he lives with. His girlfriend. Those two words are enough to send a pang through Kakashi's chest.

So Kakashi closes himself off, coiling everything about himself tighter into a ball and keeps it hidden beneath his old floorboards. He kills a child younger than he was when he made a chuunin, wipes the blood off his kunai on the child's shirt and slips away into the darkness without feeling anything.

He doesn't think that this what Obito could have wanted, or Rinâ€”giving their lives to protect his. Rin did die in his placeâ€”he is the one who killed her, after all. Kakashi knows that this isn't what his Sensei would want him to do. But he does anyway.

Kakashi can plunge his hands in blood up to his elbows, and not feel a thing besides the twinges in his left arm and the prickle in Obito's eye. The taste of singed flesh on the tip of his tongue is as familiar as the gnawing loneliness of his heart.

Obito's eye completes the chidori and Kakashi uses it to kill countless innocent and not so innocent people. And feels, deep down, somewhere inside, that this is not what chidori should be used for.

Time flies like the seafaring bird, fast and unstoppable, and each part of Kakashi freezes into stone. There is but one thing that reminds him of being alive, the forever fire in his gut. Kakashi wishes for it to extinguish too, but it persists.

Then, it comes.

Kakashi stands in the bleak hospital room, irritated beyond measure. Instead of being on the frontlines, he is here, trapped, in a small room looking at the sweating, writhing woman on the bed. Painful convulsions wrack her thin body, long red hair sticking to her cheeks and forehead in clumps. She does not scream, but her lip is bleeding and she seems to be in endless pain.

Kakashi marvels her strength on some level, giving birth to a child is no easy business.

The ground shakes, and Kakashi can barely pick her gasp over the uproar. There is no medic, no help, no attendant for her besides him and he knows nothing. He does not hold her handâ€”she'd break it if he tried. He feels small and helpless all of a sudden as tears slip from her eyes.

"Kakashiâ€”kun," she says weakly and he stiffens. "Get me a kunai."

"You're in no position to fight, Kushina-san," he tells her and pretends that his voice isn't shaking. If Rin was here, she'd know what to do.

"Not fight, you idiot!" Kushina says in a breathless laughter. Her slender fingers curl into a fist in front of his eyes. "To give birth," she explains.

He gapes at her, transfixed. She laughs.

"He,"â€”and there's no need to explain who he is, the way she says itâ€”"needs this child to complete this jutsu. The jutsu he needs to

stop _that_." Her eyes swivel towards the open window where Kyuubi's making a red sunrise in the middle of the night. "My time is upâ€"the birth can't be delayed any longer."

The ground shakes and a few hospital equipments clatter to the floor. Kakashi bites his lip in indecision. He _cannot_ do this.

He's saved from making that decision as Sensei bursts into the room. A few medic-nins follow him and Kakashi wonders where they were when she was going to _cut herself up._

It doesn't take too long for the medics to do it for her and extract the child. Like she had said, the birth cannot wait anymore; Sensei and Konoha have simply run out of time. Of course, it is better for a skilled medic to do thatâ€"and yet, he knows that she won't survive too longâ€"or so it seems the way Sensei's face falls.

It is the raised voice of her that attracts his attention. The wound in her abdomen has been closed and she's sitting, grey and thin. Her voice is loud though.

"I'm not dead yet, dammit!" she says savagely. "I can still fight. Teach me that goddamned jutsu!"

"No," Sensei replies shortly.

"I'm not gonna survive!" Kushina exclaims. "Do you want our child to grow up alone? With that thing in his stomach and no one to care for him?"

"Konoha will take care of him."

"I bet my ass they won't! Lend me some chakra, teach me that jutsuâ€"you know I'm a quick study," Kushina says as she stands up shakily on her feet. "And let me do it. I'm gonna die anyway!"

Kakashi's throat clogs up. _Sensei was going to sacrifice himself. He still might._

"No."

"For fuck's sake, Minato!" she yells, loud and brashâ€"so unlike her pretty face and delicate looks. "One of us _has_ to live, for _Naruto's_ sake!"

Obito's eye is burning again. Kakashi scrambles away from them, stands up and shakes.

_Sensei can't die! Just _**_can't_**!

Kushina walks into him and he wraps his arms around her and in front of Kakashi's eyes, his hands blur into familiar seal. Kakashi is there before he can think, grabbing the man's wrists before he can complete the jutsu.

"Don't die." escapes Kakashi's throat before he can stop it. Obito's eye is bleeding and he can't bring himself to care. It isn't a pleaâ€"Kakashi realizes once he has said it.

Sensei's eyes widen and Kushina pulls away, accusing and angry. "Stop that!" she growls. "Don't try to play the martyr here! Take responsibility for your _fucking_ actions!"

Kakashi drops Sensei's wrists and steps back—he isn't required here. He quashes down the sick feeling in his chest with firmness and goes to stand beside the newborn's crib. They don't take long to come to a decision.

They leave together, the entire family: Sensei, Kushina-san and Naruto and out into the open, right where Kyuubi rampages. Kakashi feels that he'd be lucky if even one of them comes back.

The aftermath of Kyuubi's attack is just as bad: what the actual rampage didn't do, is done by the doubt, fear and anger now imbued in the very souls of the villagers and shinobi alike. There's no family who hasn't lost a part of itself, there's no one who is untouched by the calamity.

Kakashi's most precious person is alive, but at what cost?—Kushina-san's dead, Naruto's still lives, but the council wants to do away with him. Sensei keeps on insisting that the demon has been sealed for a reason, but the Daimyou, the council are wary. They do not want a repetition of this, there's no way Konoha will live through another Kyuubi again.

It's been over a year, closer to two, but it feels much, much more. The process of rebuilding an entire village is tedious and oftentimes irritating. Kakashi perseveres, if it's just for him. Sensei is overworked, between handling the small civil unrests, the pressure of the council, and having to take care of such a young child without the mother.

He sees Sensei less and less with each passing day, and it is partly his fault. Sensei is vulnerable right now, bereaved, tired, drained—Kakashi can very easily take advantage of it, and manipulate Sensei into anything he wants. But—that's unfair and Kakashi can't go through it.

Obito hurts less, maybe because Kakashi isn't indulging so much in mindless killings and ANBU assassinations missions, but on village rebuilding—then, Obito never liked things like that. He isn't very sure if Obito ever wanted to be a ninja like this. Though, he was proud of being an Uchiha, but that was as far as he was willing to go.

Kakashi finishes the last of his D-Rank mission, done for the day and turns to leave that he's stopped by another ANBU captain.

"Deliver this to the Hokage, we are leaving on an urgent mission," he says, tossing him a scroll and disappearing. Troubled, but not completely averse to it, Kakashi changes his route and heads for the Hokage office. This is the first time in several months that he's going alone in that room, not for a briefing or any other shinobi business. He's going as an errand boy.

The guard ANBU glance at him, and let him pass. He's well recognized; both in and outside the ANBU circles, being the Hatake prodigy and the Copy Ninja moniker that has been tacked to his name recently.

Sensei is writing something, and Kakashi pauses just to watch; to see the way the man's wrist twists and moves and his fingers tighten or relax their grip over the brush. The Yondaime puts the paper down and places the brush away, and without raising his head, greets him.

"Hello, Kakashi-kun, it's been a while."

"Hm," Kakashi replies, walking forward to give him the scroll and get out of there. The man's aura is different, hinting at something darker and decidedly foreign that Kakashi has never felt before. It makes him uncomfortable.

Sensei raises his head, startling Kakashi by the intense look in his rather blue eyes. There's something so out of place in his gaze, even if the lines of his mouth and the glow in his eyes is the same. Kakashi almost flushes, embarrassed and mortified that he could feel his groin stirring by the intensity of Sensei's gaze alone.

"Am I that desperate?" he silently questions himself as he walks forward, scroll clutched in leather clad fingers that are sweating underneath.

"Here, I was asked to deliver this to you," he says quietly and places the scroll on Sensei's outstretched hand. During the exchange, he can feel the phantom brush of their fingers, enough to make his skin tingle and his spine stiffen.

"Thank you," the Yondaime says and smiles. Kakashi gives a short nod and backs a little, fully intent on leaving as soon as he could. Only to be stopped as Sensei speaks again.

"Going so soon, Kakashi-kun?" the man asks "his voice is a touch wistful and Kakashi can't leave now. "Won't you stay awhile? We haven't spent any time together in forever."

"You've been busy," Kakashi replies, shrugging.

"Never too busy for you, Kakashi-kun," the man protests, standing up and moving towards him before Kakashi can register. The Yondaime has always been known for speed, as he's before Kakashi before he could even see him move. There's a hand on his shoulder and the Yondaime's face is close to his, blue eyes questioning and slightly wounded. Kakashi sucks in a short breath, startled.

"Uhâ€|"

"Let's go for some ramen!" Sensei declares cheerfully and drags him away.

The silence between the two of them stretches to horizon and back, but it's more like they are waiting for something. Some catharsis; once that is over, they will talk.

Sensei carefully breaks his chopsticks apart and takes the first bite of his ramen, making Kakashi follow his example not too soon after. He pulls his mask down, practically inhales the food and pulls it back again. He's getting better at eating things at a rapid rate ever since he got into ANBU where he wears more masks than one.

"They are going to decide Naruto's fate tomorrow," is what Sensei opens the conversation with. He stirs the broth and the noodles with the chopsticks, not eating, not really hungry. Kakashi can't expect him to be either. Naruto could be killed tomorrow and Sensei might end up totally powerless in the situation; Kakashi doesn't see how they can expect him to the Hokage in case that happens.

A powerless Hokage is no longer useful.

He folds his hands together and leans forward, bracing his weight on elbows and says, "What if they do decide toâ€¦" doesn't complete it though. There's no need to expressly state the sort of inevitable futureâ€”denying it wouldn't make it less true, but at least they can use some reprieve.

"I won't allow them," Sensei says shortly, voice brittle in a way Kakashi has never heard before.

Kakashi doesn't question Sensei's claim, never has, never will. If the man says that he won't allow it, then it wouldn't happen. Though, if Naruto dies, thenâ€”then Sensei will be as alone as Kakashi is. With only one precious person to hold on to, with only one anchor point to stay onâ€”and if that's taken away, they'd be torn apart and tossed into the turbulent oceans of life.

He clenches his jaw, berating himself for the streak of selfishness that wishes for Sensei to be lonely and broken, so that Kakashi can have him. But isn't that what he always does? Hurt and break his loved ones? It certainly isn't the first timeâ€”and definitely not the last. Then again, if Sensei is goneâ€¦there would be nothing left.

Kakashi's lips thin behind the mask and he throws a surreptitious look at the man. Golden bangs shield most of his face from Kakashi's gaze, but what little he can see, it's all despair. It steals the breath from his lungs and warmth from his body. The sudden look of utter desolation is like a blow to Kakashi's gut and he sits, motionless, crumbling in the most painful of ways.

His thought that once they got the awkwardness out of the way, they will talk is proved false as they continue to sit in silence, each deep within his own misery. Kakashi can't do comforting, he has never been comforted, doesn't know the ways which one would use to comfort another human being. Sensei is not a child that Kakashi can pet on the head and it will be all right. Those aren't the wounds Kakashi can healâ€”not that he can heal any sort of wounds anyway.

"I've missed you," it slips out, like a jarring, discordant note in the peaceful melody of silence and Sensei turns, mostly surprised.

"I have too, Kakashi-kun," the man replies, without missing a beat and some of the tension eases out of his shoulder, and seems to enter Kakashi's because he grows only stiffer.

There is a pause, like there always isâ€”uncomfortable and embarrassing after a silly declaration. Kakashi feels like an idiot, but perseveres. He cannot run away now.

Then, Sensei speaks.

"What would you do, Kakashi, if the world was ending tomorrow?"

The question strikes a note, painfully familiar. Kakashi has seen the end of the world and came back from it too, surviving because he's good at it, climbing on the dead bodies of his comrades and precious people—still there, still breathing. The time it happened, Kakashi was too scared to think about it, about what he wanted, wants—it's the same thing really.

He knows the answer; doesn't mean he'll tell his teacher so.

"I don't know," he shrugs. "Never thought about it really." Lie, lie and such an obvious one too.

"I did." The answer should surprise him, but doesn't. "I thought about it a lot. After everything, after being through that. I wondered, what should have I thought when it was all going on. When it was certain that I'd die. What was the thing I wanted the most?"

"And what was it?" Kakashi cuts in. He doesn't like the way his teacher is speaking, doesn't like the mournful lilt in his tone, the slow, rumbling dirge congregated in his voice.

"The truth is," Sensei traces a drop of broth on the counter with his index finger, eyes unfocused and dreamy. "I don't know."

"And?" Kakashi prompts.

"And that made me sad." The man laughs, a hollow sound as far as Kakashi is concerned. It's hollow, but it's deep and cuts much, much sharper than words. "I don't even know what I wanted in the first place."

And hell if Kakashi knows the correct response to that. For all his genius and wit, he fails miserably in coming back with something that would counter that. His wit is a new ability he has developed. Snide comments, sarcasm and somewhat lighthearted take on everything is what keeps the others sane in ANBU. Kakashi never professed himself to be sane either way.

"Is it stupid?" Sensei asks suddenly, turning to face him and levelling his narrow eyed stare at him—the one that is a precursor to something bad. "To think that way?"

"I don't know, Sensei," he replies. "I don't know."

The intense look dissolves and Sensei's features close off again, hidden by a perpetual veil of pleasantness. "Let's leave then, Kakashi-kun, let's bask in our ignorance."

"And go where?"

The question: insignificant and superfluous, and yet carries so much want that Kakashi feels scared. Afraid of what might escape from Sensei's too-perfect lips and shatter the perfection Kakashi has built in his heart.

"To heaven or hell?" Sensei's eyes have a twinkle as he speaks. "Who has ever known?"

And that's true, Kakashi can't deny that. So, he simply follows, not knowing what Sensei has in his mind for tonight.

It is when the shadows of the alleys grow darker and fouler, that Kakashi feels that something is apparently not right. Why would Sensei choose such a roundabout way of getting to his office, and why drag Kakashi with him? It is the natural instinct in him that made him follow the man till here, but, he supposes that this is as far his shinobi instincts will allow him to wander.

"Sensei—" the word is tentative, unsure, so unlike him, but he carries on, voice a little louder than before; "—where are we going?"

"To the end of the world." Comes the rather cryptic and alarming reply. Kakashi furrows his brow and is about to speak again that breath is knocked out of his lungs again, this time for physical reasons. Only one man is fast enough to do that, and he's the only one who won't do something like this.

"Kakashi-kun," Sensei speaks softly and all Kakashi can feel—"because he cannot see, it's too dark"—is the press of his elbow in Kakashi's stomach and the pressure of the other arm on his neck. It's not tight enough to kill him, but it's enough to keep him pinned. "I think, I might have discovered what I wanted after all."

Kakashi swallows, the wet sound resounds in his ears and he inhales, trying not to feel heady, because all he can breathe is him, him, him—

"And what is it?" he asks, an automatic response now.

Sensei utters one word. Just one word. And it's enough to send Kakashi's world reeling into madness. His eye widens slightly to register the shock, and his entire body just throbs, as if to keep company to his heart that slams into his ribcage, rattling his bones and loud enough to heard through the entire village. The left eye registers a sharp prick and then Kakashi is numb—"can't feel anything, can't breathe.

Then it hits him, like realizations often do, hard; and smacks right across the face. Sensei is down to his last citadel, his last stronghold, if he loses this, he loses all. Kakashi doesn't count, and probably never will.

And Sensei is moving away, hands and elbows removed, misjudging his shock for rejection and Kakashi can't have that. He grabs the man's collar with nerveless fingers, curling them in the smooth-soft material of the pristine white coat of the Hokage and pulls him closer. The white hot sensation of having him flushed against his body, the way their hearts beat in tandem, each nervous for entirely different reasons and it's here and can't be avoided.

He pushes his mouth over Sensei's, forgetting to remove his mask in haste and it doesn't matter as Sensei pulls it down with ardent fingers. The first taste after years, and it still has the ability to

numb and dull Kakashi's thoughts. Against his preconception of Sensei being warm, the man's lips are cold, fingers colder, and his heart perhaps the coldest. The man no longer exudes warmth so freely, because it seems all of it has been leached away by people like Kakashi.

But, Kakashi reasons that Sensei's mouth is warm, his tongue warmer and as he slips his hand down, to tug at the man's trousers and cup his hardening erection, there's where he still burns the warmest. Kakashi is not an optimist, there's no point in being so, but the mere fact that Sensei still has warmthâ€”_that Kakashi can feed fromâ€”_it will be okay.

Sensei has one nail that has a sharper edge than the other ones which are completely blunt; it scratches and tickles his cheek, the soft underside of his chin, down his throat and traces senseless images and words, painting it for the moment of vividness and lost again.

"Iâ€|" the word breaks down somewhere between the period of undoing Sensei's trousers and touching his naked skin. Sensei closes his eyes and shudders against him; he _caused_ that, and Kakashi feels giddy.

_I did that. I made you shake like a leaf in storm, like a hapless homeless man in winters. I _win

He grabs the man's erection in a loose grip, just admiring the way it fits into his palm, hot and pulsing and wanting. There's a whimper, soft and needy, yearning to be touched and touch in return, and Kakashi feels embarrassed that he's the one making that sound. He's dreamt of this for so long, it doesn't make sense and he can't decide if it's true or not.

"Kakashi-kun," his name is a plea and it stalls Kakashi into stillness. He tightens his grip but does nothing otherwise. "â€|do youâ€"you, do you really wantâ€"this?"

_I do, even if it isn't real, even if it isn't for _me_, I want this, I've always wanted you._

"Yes."

And he's kissed, hard and brutal, teeth clacking together hard and Sensei's teeth sink into his bottom lip. Sensei's hands are everywhere, touching, marking, possessing his body. Then abruptly, he slows down and softens the kiss, as if there is no rush, no haste.

Sensei's lips have warmed up, so have his fingers, as he can feel them against his skin, under his clothes and pressing into his flesh. He can't see much, it's dark and cold and the alley ranks of something old and decayed, rotting away into nothingness; but Kakashi's lungs are filled with Sensei's breath and scent, his eyes are lit up by Sensei's brilliance and he doesn't have time for anything else.

He moves his hand, doesn't know where his other hand is, his entire existence is narrowed down to a few points, focused so sharply that other things fade into nonexistence. He jerks his wrist, eliciting

another gasp from the man and his hand is removed by Sensei's insistent fingers.

"_Not yet_," he whispers in Kakashi's ear, a warm sound that originates from the pit of his stomach like laughter. It isn't necessarily happy, but it is no longer hollow.

Warm, rough fingers undo his vest, slipping over his skin and rake fire with nine blunt and one sharp nail, stoking the fire in Kakashi's gut—"it's been there so long, just like the ache in his eye—"Obito's eye—"and it's about to be put out, released in one tremendous burst of rapture. He doesn't mind though.

Sensei's breath is a warm gust over his neck, raising gooseflesh and his mouth is like a burning live furnace over Kakashi's skin. He grapples for purchase and tangles his fingers in the man's hair, unexpectedly reminding himself of the first and the last time he touched Sensei like this. He likes this much, _much_ better.

There's some sort of dissolution in this, things that break apart inside upon the touch that isn't meant for him; each caress shatters something inside and Kakashi is drowning. But he doesn't mind, not as long as Sensei touches him, holds him and needs him.

He will deal with aftermath later, but right now they are here, and hence, he arches into the man, rubbing his groin with his, keening low in his throat.

"Sensei..." The last of the syllables coalesce with his breath to produce an embarrassing sound and Kakashi shuts his eye, mortified.

"Ngh," Sensei grunts and whispers in his ear, "don't call me that."

His eye flutters open, startled. _If I do that—we will—"no._ He looks away, burying his face in the man's neck to avoid the demand. Sensei doesn't say it again, just slips his hands between his bodies to grab Kakashi's erection.

Kakashi's body tightens and he finds that, yes, a simple touch can bring him to edge of coming like he's never come before. He digs his fingers into Sensei's neck and collarbone—"he wants to yank that coat and shirt off the man's torso, just so he could admire him—"this is his _only_ chance, if he fucks this up, he might never get the man like this again.

In one of the darkest alleys of Konohagakure, reeking of sweat, waste and trash, against the cold cement wall and hard bricks digging in his back, Kakashi feels the happiest—"if happiness is a state of mind he can ever achieve. What lightheaded euphoria courses through him is happiness, and if it isn't, then Kakashi doesn't want it.

Sensei pulls at the hem of his shirt and pulls it over, exposing Kakashi to the cold air and warm hands, and then, Sensei falls to his knees in front of him and Kakashi feels giddy again. The strongest man in Konoha is on his knees, is touching him, loving him—"how can he not be happy?

His knees are spread and Sensei fits his palms over Kakashi's hipbones, fingers digging into grooves and ridges. He pulls his underwear down completely and tangles his finger in Kakashi's silver hair. Then, Sensei looks up and his eyes are smouldering blue, and Kakashi is drowning again. He can't read that gaze, that unnamed emotion flickering in his eyes and the way it seems that he's Sensei's entire world right now.

He might as well be.

But then, Kakashi knows that he won't remain so—"there's no need to hope here. He closes his eye and bites his lip, waiting for the man to proceed, and he does, by taking Kakashi's straining erection into his mouth. Sensei isn't skilled at this, it seems, by the way his teeth scrape against the tender flesh, the way he chokes slightly before taking Kakashi deeper—but, Kakashi isn't skilled either. His knowledge is based on the questionable books Sensei's Sensei writes, and in them, it seems that all blowjobs are perfect and everyone is naturally skilled them.

Kakashi feels laughter bubble up in his gut, like lava bubbling in a volcano's center, hot and red, ready to explode. He clenches his fists and drags the curled fingers against the wall behind him, feeling the grit and rough edge bite into his skin. His stomach clenches and unclenches, as the hot mouth takes him as deep as he could go, and Sensei's nose nudges his hair. And that can't be easy, can't be comfortable, but Sensei's mouth is still on him and he's swallowing Kakashi completely—and Kakashi doesn't mind.

Then Sensei sucks, and Kakashi's hands fly to grip his face, neck, hair, whatever he can hold. Kakashi's still short, and Sensei is half-crouching on his knees and it's uncomfortable and yet he's doing that—the thought alone sends electricity down his spine. He knows, if Sensei sucks him once again, Kakashi will come and then it will all be over and Sensei will never fuck him.

"No!—"stop—" he grounds out, pulling at the man's hair. He's panting, flushed and painfully aroused, on the brim of ejaculating and his voice seems like a weak whine. How can Sensei even like him like this?

And Sensei does. He pulls away, letting Kakashi's cock slip out of his mouth with a soft audible pop that echoes throughout the dingy alley. Sensei stays in his position, motionless for several long seconds that Kakashi utilizes to get his breath back. When once he's certain that he won't sound completely unlike himself, he opens his mouth, and yet again, Sensei beats him to it.

"I'm sorry, Kakashi-kun, I wasn't thinking—" and he sounds normal, apologetic, but normal. Whatever dark was coating his words again is gone and Kakashi gets the distinct impression that Sensei is curling up on himself, berating himself for taking advantage of Kakashi and he can't have that.

He drops to his knees too, and grabs Sensei's rather startled face, and kisses him soundly on the mouth. It's clumsy, mostly, it's his teeth clacking together with Sensei's, and the man tastes really odd. Then again, he _was_ sucking Kakashi's off only a few minutes ago.

He pulls at Sensei's shirt and bites at the man's swollen lip, impatient to the core. He starts when Sensei suddenly grips his wrist and pushes him against the wall again, head soundly connecting with the cold cement and his mouth drops open as Sensei latches on to his chest, pulling his nipple—"right or left, he isn't sure"—with his teeth. Kakashi wiggles a little and the trousers stuck around his knees drop to the ground, leaving him mostly naked. His head throbs mildly, one of the lingering effects of slamming, but he ignores it.

Sensei's hand skitters down his back, ghosting across the bumps of his backbone and the dip of his back and cups his buttock, squeezing the pliable but firm flesh. His tongue pries open Kakashi's mouth, slipping past every defense and tilts Kakashi's face to the side to go deeper inside. Kakashi wraps his leg around Sensei's thigh and ass, pressing their groins together and this is the first touch of their mutual needs, the first real jolt of electricity that Kakashi now experiences.

It burns, unlike chidori that singes his opponents; this is a self-inflicting spark that sears through him, electrocuting even the edges of his nerves. He writhes a little, sucking Sensei's sweet-sour breath, and holds onto him as if he is the anchor of his world—and he is, _of course_ he is.

The man grabs both of their erections in his one hand and the fingers of his other hand probe at the tight ring of muscles of his asshole and Kakashi jerks forward, his stomach flutters and he comes between them, hot and fast.

Sensei moves back a bit, stomach and chest splattered with Kakashi's cum and his own erection still hard—"still there" and Kakashi wants it so bad, he whimpers. He moves forward, compensating for the distance Sensei added, and sucks on the slope of man's smooth, damp neck, tasting salt and mild tang of his skin. He licks it, instinctively mimicking his nin-dogs, but Sensei doesn't seem to care.

"Kakashi-kun," Sensei's voice is hoarse and gravelly. He sounds terrible and Kakashi's stomach flutters slightly. It's now that Kakashi removes his shirt and places a kiss on his chest, mouthing the skin slightly.

It's mostly to occupy his mouth, before he comes out and sprouts out nonsense like confessing his feelings. His mind is mellowed, his defenses are down—he could speak right now without inhibition and get away with it. Only, the rejection would hurt much, much more.

But, the least he can do is—Kakashi grabs the man's erection and fists it lightly, flicking the head with his thumb and slicking his hand with the sticky liquid. Sensei pants in his ear, fine tremors wracking the man's body. He wonders, Kakashi wonders if—

There's a little gasp and Sensei's hand tighten on Kakashi's shoulder. Kakashi freezes momentarily, that couldn't have—it couldn't be—but he doesn't have the time to think as the man is coming, right in Kakashi's hand and then slumps over him, right at home in the alley, against the wall and in the dark.

He's naked, sticky, warm and Sensei's heart is beating against his shoulder. He can die happily now, without a regret in the world.

He shifts, adjusting his legs and it shakes Sensei out of his stupor. The man leans backwards and then—there's what Kakashi has dreaded all along—his face registers a fair amount of horror and disbelief. The man's fingers dig painfully into his shoulder and Kakashi is hard-pressed not to react. His face burns in shame and his heart shrivels up inside his chest, registering the pain of rejection that is soon to follow.

"—Kakashi—" the man cuts himself off as Kakashi gets up suddenly. It isn't so easy to keep a straight face when one is going to be rejected; he'd better not hear it at all.

He grabs his clothes and pulls them on, aware of the man's eyes on him, but he keeps his face so that Sensei cannot speak. His throat clogs up slightly, as if he has swallowed wet cotton, heavy and wet, and warm—oh, so warm. He feels nauseous, wants to hack it out, wants to break down and do something—anything.

Finally, he pulls his mask up, glances at the man sitting on the floor of the alley and says nothing. If he opens his mouth, he'll say something idiotic and then—but what do I have to lose?—he thinks bitterly. Instead, he zips his vest and says in the most level voice he could manage at the moment, "You should go back to the tower, Hokage-sama."

Maybe it is a trick of the light, or lack thereof, but it feels as if Sensei's expression morphed into something akin to pain. Or maybe it is just disgust—Kakashi doesn't know. And he doesn't want to know either. The warmth is all gone, leaving behind enduring cold in its wake—it envelops Kakashi so thoroughly that he can't breathe there for a moment.

And then, he leaves.

"So, what am I doing here again?" Kakashi asks, mildly displeased. He looks at the blond-haired, blue-eyed child lying in a bed not too far from where he stands.

"We have to remove him from here and take him to the Hokage tower, where the council is being held, deciding Naruto-kun's fate," his partner replies, rubbing his thumb over the smooth hilt of his katana. He sounds thoughtful, which is quite unlike him, but Kakashi doesn't have time to dawdle.

"Why us?" he asks, already knowing the answer pretty well. It would hurt him even more if Kakashi and his team remove his son and bring him to be judged by a set of straight-faced tyrants.

"Don't ask me that," Tenzou shrugs minutely, and walks forward, nearer to the child asleep—just lying there, like a helpless lamb. One that Kakashi could kill with a flick of his wrist. He leans against the wall, glancing out of the window and notices one of the few ANBU guards that watch over Hokage's house.

Naruto might be killed today.

It's a curious thing about realizations; they often hit you like a

physical blow, and shake your entire universe. Kakashi feels something similar again. In that moment, following that thought, comes the realization that like him, Sensei is also a very unfortunate man. Like Kakashi, his precious people also keep on dying too.

Maybe, just maybeâ€|

Now, in that moment Kakashi understands the man more than he has ever before and it leaves him shell-shocked.

Didâ€|wasâ€|could it be?

"Sempai?" Tenzou's voice startles him out of his stupor and he turns, perceiving the small body slung over his kouhai's shoulder. Their job here is done.

"Nuh, come on," Kakashi says and they are on their way to the Hokage tower. Almost all of the ANBU force in Konoha is concentrated on the Hokage tower today, just because of this trial. The councilors fear that the Hokage would go against their decision and create trouble for them. The question is what Sensei will do, considering everything.

Amongst the uncertainties, Kakashi has one absolute conviction; he'd stand beside the Yondaime, no matter what happened up until now. He owes his teacher that much, if nothing else.

"What do you think, sempai?" Tenzou asks once are out of earshot of the guard ANBU and Kakashi turns to him, not really interested in chitchat.

"About what?"

"The Hokage might not agree with the council and daimyou's decision, in which case, the council can ask the ANBU to forcefully remove the Hokage from the scene while carrying out the sentence."

"The ANBU work directly under the Hokage, and so they are loyal to him." Kakashi pauses and asks, "What do _you_ think?"

"So much dispute over a small child," Tenzou shakes his head. "I don't get it, to be honest."

"They don't see him for what he is, but rather what he carries inside him. To them, Naruto is just a prison for Kyuubi, one that the demon can break at any time."

"I know, but I don't get it. The sealing jutsu Hokage-sama used is perfect, Kyuubi cannot escape andâ€|"

Kakashi cuts in, saying, "This is something you and I understand, the shinobi understand, but the common public can't. You haven't interacted with the civilians much, so of course you don't get it."

"I'm an ANBU," Tenzou says shortly.

"So am I," _but you're also an experiment._ He doesn't say that out loud. They have already arrived at the tower, somehow not registering

much of the journey up until here. Kakashi feels really out of it anywayâ€”has felt that since last evening, after _that_.

They are ushered to one of the most heavily guarded room in the tower, situated at the back, but still surrounded by several other rooms. It's like a vault, closed off from all the sides and painted in austere colours. Kakashi closes the door behind himself, and Tenzou places Naruto on one of the chairs, still fast asleep.

"Put a sleeping jutsu on it," one of the councilors, the female one speaks and Tenzou steps back, inviting Kakashi to do it. He can understand the other's reluctance, judging by the way Sensei stiffens across the room; anyone would be hesitant to do that to Sensei's son.

Nevertheless, he walks forward and before he can decide his hands are mimicking the same seals of the same jutsu Sensei used on him all those years ago. His Sharingan had been exposed at that time, and there's some kind of irony in this as he channels chakra into Naruto's body. So easy to do that on a child, and it makes him realize exactly how small he was at _that time_.

"You can leave now," the other councilor says and Kakashi knows that despite the word choice, it is not a request. They are already aware of the relationshipâ€”or lack thereof, between him and Sensei. Kakashi nods tersely and exits, leaving Tenzou, Naruto and Sensei behind in a group of vulture like humans.

The sun is unnaturally bright today, making the weather balmy in the generally harsh winters. There's a wisp of clouds on the distant horizon, white and innocent, dusting the brilliant blue with a splash of pale shadow. Kakashi sits, motionless, staring up into the blinding expanse of the heavens, wondering.

The minutes stretch into hours, the sun keeps on descending on the western horizon, elongating the shadows and stealing the warmth from the rays. The village is peaceful below him, the streets filled with the usual pandemonium of everyday life and Kakashi watches, riveted to the spot as life seems to crawl by, heedless of what decision might take place behind the closed doors.

Then the door opens and the councilors step out, followed by the daimyou and by the way their lips are down into a frown, Kakashi guesses that they weren't able to bend Sensei to their will. He smiles behind his mask, in his hidden sanctuary where no one can see it. Tenzou is the last person to walk out, and he closes the door behind him, coming to stand beside Kakashi.

"So?"

He shrugs, removing his porcelain mask to take a deep breath and says, "So nothing, sempai. Naruto-kun will live."

"What did it cost him?" Kakashi asks casually, glancing at the younger man from the corner of his eye.

"His life," Tenzou replies. "If ever Naruto-kun goes out of control, Yondaime-sama will have to kill him and then forfeit his life. As a punishment, you see?"

It takes almost everything Kakashi has to not exclaim out loud. His hands tighten into fists inside the pocket of his trousers, but otherwise he shows no outward reaction to the news.

"There weren't many options to choose from," Tenzou elaborates, scratching his chin and staring out of the window of the corridor. "Either he could have had Naruto-kun killed, or surrender him to the ROOT."

"ROOT?" Kakashi raises an eyebrow, even if it isn't visible to the other man.

"So they could train him into a weapon of the council. Naturally, both Yondaime-sama and Sandaime-sama objected to that. In the end, I think that if Sandaime-sama hadn't been there, Naruto-kun might not have survived after all. That or, we would have lost Yondaime-samaâ€"in one way or other. He was clearly upset, so much so in fact, that he snapped at the daimyou and you know how polite he is usually."

"He was angry?" Kakashi asks.

"No," Tenzou replies, "he just sounded a little off. Considering he was the one who offered to die in Naruto's place, if, he said and I quote, 'If the council someone's life, take mine instead.'"

Kakashi's throat feels grainy; as if he's gulped down a handful of sand and tried to down it all in one go. He swallows and turns slightly towards the closed door.

Senseiâ€|

Once when Kakashi was very youngâ€"though he doesn't remember his life in years, but in deaths and missionsâ€"_now I have lived fifty six deaths and countingâ€"_numbers may be superficial, and he misses most of them, because sometimes he can't tell things apart. Like grievously injuring someone and slitting their heads altogether, so in a way, Kakashi doesn't have a very clear sense of time passing.

Obito's eye sees all, but he's still blind; everything slips by and he's so powerless to stop it. It's in the passage of time, the day-by-day aging of heart and body, the never-ending cycle of life and deathâ€"Kakashi knows, and yet he cannot see. Even with the Sharingan, he's blind to it.

That doesn't, however, mean that Kakashi _cannot_ understand things that happen, things that people do. His depth perception is skewed, in more ways than one. He is so shortsighted, it's funny because he's a ninja, a fairly good one at thatâ€"already other ninja across the continent know him, fear him. Bingo books contain information on himâ€"authenticity be damned, it's there, take it or leave itâ€"and so many shinobi would like to get their hands on him.

Kakashi isn't conceited, these are merely facts that he's well-aware of, and he isn't proud of that. And it isn't the point either. The point here is, Kakashi is a ninja, he's been taught how to take the advantage in a situation and so deep this lesson runs that Kakashi finds himself here, just outside the Hokage's chamber, planning to

attack the man now that he's at his most vulnerable point.

Naruto may have lived, but that had to have taken some toll on the man's psyche, and that's what Kakashi is aiming to strike at.

Kakashi supposes that he should feel bad for doing this, but he's a ninja and ninjas play dirty, period. Besides, as painful as it might have been, now that's he's tasted Sensei, he's addictedâ€"so badly that his entire body aches in yearning. Hundredfold more now that it was something not confused fumbling for nearness and longing to hold onto somethingâ€"but real, live desire to touch and be touched, to have Sensei inside, to swallow up the man's entire being and be swallowed by it.

Kakashi knows that this fire will burn him inside out, harm him more than its worth, and that Sensei will also go down with himâ€"but Kakashi is so greedy, so selfish that he doesn't care about it.

Existing so long without a purpose other than killing, it is the one, single, overwhelming desireâ€"the one want that he has, but cannot haveâ€"fuels his resolve, and makes him ignore the ramifications of his choice. But then, it always did come down to choices, and making them.

But Kakashi would be lying if he based all of his resolve on his desire and the fire in his gut that has returned. There's something else, something deeper, located somewhere in the back of his mind, the latent realization that's always been there, just Kakashi never chose to act on it.

The door opens with a silent creak, disturbing the silence and Kakashi shuts it just as quietly. The Yondaime is there, sitting on his chair, face held in hands and studying his scroll. Kakashi knows that the man has been aware of his presence since he stepped inside the building, and that's why he doesn't acknowledge his entry in the room.

He can deal with that. In fact, he hopes to deal with that.

Sensei is avoiding him, has been avoiding him for the last three days, and while it is nothing compared to the time Kakashi avoided him after Rin's deathâ€"and Kushina-san's death as well, Kakashi can feel the length of the three days in more clarity as compared to the years spent otherwise.

"Why did you do that?" Kakashi asks, blunt to the point of being cruel. But Sensei is his to break, and he will break him now, the same way Sensei has been breaking him for so long.

"Do what?" Sensei asks, without raising his head, feigning ignorance.

"Back then, in that alley, why did you do that to me?" Kakashi now stands not two feet away from the man. He sounds hysterical, he knows, but that's what he wants to sound like, right now, at least.

"I didn't do anything you didn't consent to, Kakashi," Sensei

replies, not raising his head _still_ and Kakashi feels out of loop again. He came here to break the man, and by the looks of it, it seems that it will be done the other way round. The coolness of the tone alone is enough to throw him off. It is as if Sensei doesn't even careâ€|

Was he wrong? Had he presumed wrongly? His heart thuds in his chest like an overworked motor, erratic and out of sync, ready to give out at any moment and explode.

Kakashi remembers that Sensei can be extraordinarily cold if he wants to beâ€"but even soâ€|

"Youâ€| "

"No," Sensei cuts in neatly, the way he slices opponents with his kunai, neat and efficient, and does not give themâ€" _himâ€" _a chance to speak. "You, Kakashi, it's all about you."

Kakashi stiffens in outrage, angerâ€"so much anger. It burns through his head in angry red lines, blinding him momentarily.

_How the hell is it about me? It's always been about _**_you_**_! How you're my life, how you're the only one I have, how you're the one I can never have! If you're not there, where will I go? What will I do? If you're not thereâ€|where would I go then? If youâ€|if you were toâ€|_

Obito's eye sears in pain and liquid warmth, and it hurts so damn much; his face is on fire, his eyes are on fire and his heart's about to give out and _how the fuck is it about me_?

Sensei has broken him again. Kakashi hadn't known that someone could break him nowâ€"isn't he already broken enough? _What more do you_â€"

Sensei's lips are on his, soft but bruising, insistent and warmâ€"a study in contrasts and sheer, sharp pleasure. When did Sensei get up, when was his mask pulled down?

â€" _the hell_?

Sensei mouths against his lips, "I'm not gay, Kakashi-kun,"â€"the suffix is back and Kakashi can very well translate Sensei's declaration as: _I don't want you_.

Something like hysteria creeps along Kakashi's spine, tickling the edge of his nerves and rendering him paralysed. Sensei is kissing him again but Kakashi tastes only ashâ€"tasteless and bland, full of death.

Kakashi can't move his hands, can't touch Sensei back, can't open his eye to see the look on the man's face, can't even move back and end the cruel kissâ€"no, he just stands there, feeling the pressure of too-perfect lips over his, sucking him dry.

He can't remember cryingâ€"ever. Once, his nin-dog had bitten his arm, sinking sharp canines deep into the flesh and Kakashi had felt warm liquid drip from his eyes and a warm lump in his throat, wanting out. He hadn't sobbed, just held it out for father, waiting for it to

be fixed and end the pain.

He hadn't cried when father had died. He hadn't cried when Obito had died either. But since Obito's eye had been placed in his eye socket, it had the irritating habit of leaking the same warm, salty liquid sometimes.

Kakashi wants to cry now. If he could, he probably would. But he doesn't know how to. Perhaps Obito would start crying for him now and Kakashi won't feel the strangling feeling in his chest, the absolutely devastating pain in his heart.

He's being backed, moved somewhere; Sensei's hands are warm and gentle on his body, and he's being laid down on the couch in the Hokage chamber. The back of his head hits the pillow and his back sinks into the soft material. It's really comfortable, just like the weight of Sensei's body over his and the body heat that warms him inside out.

Sensei undoes his vest, pulling it away from his body and unbuttons his trousers. Kakashi just lies there, limp but not really unresponsive, even if he tried. Sensei's fingers stoke the heat inside him, arouse him more than anything ever could; he waits and waits for it to break but it doesn't.

What it is, of course, is debatable.

"You want me, right?" Sensei asks, dark and thick voice pouring over Kakashi's being and he nods, giving his wordless consent.

Of course, I want you. And I don't need your pity, but I'll take it anyway.

Sensei takes him in again and Kakashi's need explodes in warm, visible shrapnel of desire and he arches, gasping, heaving from breath from the sudden flash of pleasure. The mouth is so silky, so perfectly warm and soft, it is a surprise that Kakashi doesn't come as soon as he's taken in completely.

Sensei lets him go and pulls his legsâ€"naked legs over his naked shouldersâ€"and when did they both undress?â€"and his slick, cold fingers are probing at Kakashi's anus.

He mewls, there's no other word for the embarrassing sound that spilled from his throat and he's coming apart from the touch alone. Sensei nuzzles his thigh, mouthing the damp, too-pale skinâ€"why isn't he perfect honey brown like Sensei anyway?â€"why'd he have to be so ugly and unappealingâ€"maybe if he was prettierâ€"because she wasâ€"Sensei would have really wanted him.

Stupid grey hair and stupid pale skin, it's like Kakashi is a living wraithâ€"too flat and dead. He's too skinny, all bones, not-adequate muscles and pointy limbs. How can anyone want him?

He flushes in shame, burying his face in the cushion and inhales deeply. On one hand, he wants Sensei to take him, to take him as hard as he can and leave him battered and bruised to the core, on other hand, he wants Sensei to really love himâ€"even if it isn't possible, but Kakashi can dream, can't he?â€"and if humans had a third hand, Kakashi wants to shove the man off and run as far as he

could.

Humans only have two arms, and Kakashi only has two options out of three, and he doesn't know what to do.

Then, Sensei's fingers are on his face, and his legs slip from Sensei's shoulders. He's hauled into the man's lap and Sensei's stroking his face with wet fingers.

"Kakashi?" the voice is wondering and soft, like caramel and Kakashi can almost taste it on his tongue. "Why are you? Did I hurt you?"

The gentleness of his voice is at odds with his actions, but he does sound like the man Kakashi has loved for so long now. Shakily "spurred to action by the kindness" Kakashi wraps his arms around Sensei's neck and buries his face into it, inhaling his scent. It smells a little like crushed leaves and sweat, and it's heady and sharp at points.

"Why are you crying, Kakashi?" Sensei asks and Kakashi's eyes no, eyes flutter open. He touches his face by his hand wrapped around the other's neck, it's not really comfortable at this angle, but Kakashi only needs one touch.

And he is. His cheeks are wet and his eyes sting.

He never realized "so this is how you cry? He hiccoughs, now aware of the tightly wound pressure in his throat and makes a strangled noise. How could Obito do that so often? Crying hurt; scratched his throat raw and chafed his eyes red and puffy and his stomach hurt, his chest hurt "but the ache there is so constant, Kakashi thinks that he would feel hollow if it were to disappear "and he feels queasy, ready to pass out. Ants crawl on his skin and he breaks out in cold sweat "crying is a little like dying, only more painful because _it hurts so goddamned much!_

He's still hard. Why the hell is he hard? Why the hell is body so wanton that even in so much pain, all it wants is for Sensei to screw him into the next Tuesday.

"Kakashi, what's wrong?" Sensei asks "he's been asking that for so long, but now the tone is sharper, is the voice of the Hokage and Kakashi's body stiffens in response.

"You?" he swallows; words, tears, rejection, humiliation and pain rolled into one single drag of saliva and air.

He sounds so much like a wounded child, it's pathetic.

"I told you that I " Sensei pauses for a second, as if unsure how to articulate his thoughts, then continues, "What do you want then, Kakashi?"

"Fuck me," Kakashi replies without missing a beat, trying not to sound as anguished as he feels. Sensei presses the whisper of a kiss on his hair and runs his hands over his back, warm and comforting.

He adjusts Kakashi so that he's straddling Sensei's thigh, and cool

fingers are probing into him again. One digit goes in and Kakashi gasps, it does not hurt, but it's strange, foreign, terrifying and arousing. It's Sensei, his teacher, the knowledge that this it is the finger of the man he loves moving inside him sends pleasure jolts down his stomach and spine and causes his cock to twitch.

Sensei isn't the same person he fell in love with, but he's still him. And Kakashi has come to love this darker, more dangerous and hurtful man too. Becauseâ€"yes, if he leaves Sensei, he has nowhere else to go. It's both need and want, necessity and compulsion, love and constraint at work hereâ€"and they are jumbled together so badly, one can't tell them apart anymore.

Or Kakashi can't, either way.

He bucks and arches, rubbing his leaking erection into sensei's stomach, clamping down on his fingersâ€"nowâ€"inside him, moving, exploring, violating in the sweetest of ways.

Even the anguish tastes pleasant now that sensei has his fingers inside him, filling him up to the brim. He raises his face and kisses the man, skimming his cheeks, jaw and chin with his lips, wanting to kiss the lips but not daring enough. Sensei understands and kisses back, searching for his lips and sinking teeth into Kakashi's lower lip as if it is some treat, butter-soft and delectable.

The fingers stop moving and Kakashi's heart flutters inside his chest as they are pulled out, and then, there's the sound of lube being squirted on somethingâ€"he knows what that is thoughâ€"and then, and then it's there, nudging his entrance, at the loosened muscles slightlyâ€"it's warm, it's wet and it's hard and it steals Kakashi's breath.

Sensei pulls with his fingers and guides himself inside, murmuring something into his ear and Kakashi only remembers nodding, because, hell, he'd die if the man stopped now.

It's painful, he supposes, but the physical pain is always dwarfed by the mental, Kakashi knows that and so he pretends that it doesn't hurt, that the agony is nothing but white-hot pleasure coating over him, because damn, it's Sensei and it can't be painful even if the man tried to hurt him. The sheer pleasure of this being him is enough to dull any painâ€"this is nothing, nothing at all.

It's like being impaled on a katana; only, it's more hot, more thrillingâ€"more of everything. Kakashi squirms a little and shoves Sensei deeper inside.

Mine, mine, mine, in me, so mine. A part of me, so mine.

Logic has never been so amazing before, never so satisfying. As far as he knows, Sensei hasn't slept with anyone other than Kushina-san and him, unless he was really sneaky about it, and so, the knowledge is exhilarating.

Sensei moves and Kakashi moves back, completely in rhythm, back and forth, releasing carnal pleasureâ€"but, that isn't what interests Kakashi so much as the knowledge of it that does. Both are wonderful, but knowledge is more enduring, more lastingâ€"pleasure will come and go, this feeling will always remain with him, this knowledge that

You Are Mine!"it's buried so deep in his bones that only death can take it away.

His heart throbbed and stomach contracted with each thrust, along with the building, mounting pressure in his groin"how odd that he doesn't even need to touch himself to cum right now. He turns and bites sensei's neck, nuzzling the soft, sweat-darkened blond hair on the nape of his neck and the body underneath him stiffens. A sound tears itself from the man's mouth and he's coming, shooting cum inside Kakashi's body and if the hot, molten euphoria isn't enough to tip Kakashi over the edge, the look of pure bliss and ecstasy on Sensei's face is.

Sensei leans backwards and pulls Kakashi over his chest, skin sticky with sweat and reeking of sex and something else and Kakashi's face is crusted with dry tears and this is heaven again. He wraps his arms around sensei's neck tighter and burrows his face into the sweaty neck"as long as they don't look at each other, don't talk to each other, this wouldn't be shattered, this perfect heaven of theirs.

"I love you," Kakashi whispers like a broken doll, mouthing the only words he remembers after everything. The rest has been wiped out by the pleasure still humming in his veins, washed away and buried somewhere deep and would only be dredged up once the haze on Kakashi's mind fades a little.

"I know," Sensei replies softly. "I"so do I."

The skin beneath his cheek heats up"Sensei is embarrassed"because he isn't lying"and oh, oh, oh"oh God! Kakashi's back goes rigid and his lungs are heavy; no matter how deeply he inhales, they won't fill completely and he's giddy.

"The fuck_?

Kakashi's heart gallops madly, trying to slam its way out of his ribcage and his stomach roils and churns and heaves and he's dying"and _OH FUCK!_

He won't question Sensei's claim because the man does not lie, even though he's a ninja, he doesn't lie"and it's there out in the open now, admitted and accepted and Kakashi has been working himself to death"all for nothing.

Kakashi wants to laugh so hard that he would cry and burst open at the seams and bleed to death right here and now, but doesn't. Instead, he curls around the man's frame more tightly and just _breathes_. If it is a dream, then Kakashi doesn't want to wake up. He feels that if he moved or opened his eyes or did something, everything will fall apart and Sensei would go back to not-wanting him, and"and"

"You said you weren't gay," he rasps accusingly.

"I'm not," Sensei replies succinctly. "The only person I _like_ is you."

That is enough because he understands. He supposes that it will take him a lot of work to actually open his eyes and face this reality

head on, but for now, this is more than enough.

And as Kakashi relaxes against him, he realizes that after years and years of constant ache in his veins and desire curling in his gut, the emptiness he came to dread isn't so intimidating after all, only because it is filled with Sensei's warmth and that's more than enough for him.

End
file.